

**CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**SEPTEMBER 16, 2010**

**PRESENT:** Diane Ripple, Glynis Underwood, Meg Kasprówicz., Jim Pearson, Sarah Matson, John Schiraj, Jamie Kasten, Rebecca Simon, Raquel Mehring, Faith Holley-Beal, Heather Rodriguez., Shirley Weymeier, Greg Jonas, Barb Holtz, Ed Cohen, Amy Bauman, Maura McMahon, Kim Sue Lanster

**STAFF PRESENT:** Pete Slesar, Jesús Mireles

Diane Ripple called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Diane Ripple made a motion, seconded by Raquel Mehring, to approve the minutes of July 15, 2010.

Barb Holtz suggested sending a group sympathy card to Dennis Farrell regarding the loss of his wife.

**SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES/FAMILY REUNIFICATION (Healthy Families; Prevention and Protection of Abused Children; St. Charles)**

John Schiraj, United Way Waukesha County, was present to report on Promoting Safe and Stable Families. He stated funding has decreased. They are responsible for two of the six goal areas set by the State, which are childcare and families at risk. They report on what agencies are doing and account for the funding. The United Way Committee reviews reports every year, ranked and rated, based on program guidelines. He gave groups about ten minutes each to give their report.

Shirley Weymeier introduced herself as the Program Manager from Healthy Families of Waukesha County, a home visitation based program. They identify families for the program before the baby is 3 months old. She shared brochures. With limited dollars, they are looking at trends and determining where the greatest needs are. Recently the moms entering into the program have multiple risk factors. There are a lot of Mental Health and AODA issues, unstable housing, limited finances, and a lack of family support. In the beginning, they meet with families once a week, then after some time it's monthly. Recently they are having to meet with them over a longer period of time and having to coordinate with other resources in the county, i.e. counselors. Another trend they have noticed is that more teens and younger teens are entering the program. Many teen moms are the product of teen mom, and they are looking at what they can do to stop the cycle. They are doing a support group for teen moms, which they are promoting to the teens as a social group. The hope is to coordinate several services to achieve a bigger impact. They are looking at how to prevent additional pregnancies, and believe that it is necessary for the teen moms to feel hopeful for the future and to feel better about

themselves. The programs include grandma, and they sometimes help improve communication between moms and grandmas when needed. Another trend is that more moms are going on to post high school education, and this is the first time they're seeing that increase. Shirley reported that they are part of a statewide outcomes program, which has been around for 12 years. They are one of seven sites in the project. They are all using the same tools to determine outcomes, and by having all this data they see the bigger picture. This year they are doing an assessment project. They are conducting a survey of moms who have been using a hand held device to track safety in the home. They have seen that Spanish-speaking families have had the most significant improvements, probably because no one had previously been able to communicate home safety issues. Another screening tool is called Ages and Stages Questionnaire, which is also used by pediatricians. She relayed a story of a family's cultural belief, which was to tightly bind the child, and as a result of using the ASQ they were able to understand the negative results of that practice and were willing to change. ASQ scores are tracked for five years. Those that completed five years were above the cutoff and ready for kindergarten. Highlights are improved parent child interaction and significantly increased scores. Being part of the outcome project has pushed them to make improvements.

Raquel Mehring from Prevention and Protection of Abused Children introduced Jamie Kasten, the supervisor of their visitation program. The visitation program exists to provide safe visitation between parents and children. There are two types of referrals; one is referrals from HHS and the other is private referrals. HHS referrals are usually children placed out of the home due to lack of parenting skills, mental health or AODA issues, domestic violence situations, financial disparity. There are a larger number of girls and children under five involved. She's received referrals from other counties and out of state as well. Outcomes are that 86% of children and parents maintain a relationship. They visit one hour a week. If a parent goes to jail, that's the usual reason a relationship is not maintained. Out of twenty-four cases closed, twenty-three had a safe permanent place. She relayed a recent story in the newspaper regarding a family she helped, which she really appreciated because often parents aren't grateful that they are given the opportunity to have a relationship with their child(ren).

Maura McMahon stated that in Milwaukee County, they bring children to the jails for visitation, and asked if that is done in Waukesha. Jamie answered that it is done here, mostly with private referrals. She will look into if it could be done for HHS referrals. Raquel added that visitation to the jails is dependant on time schedules and transportation.

Glynis Underwood from St. Charles introduced herself and explained the mentoring programming. She stated that individuals stay in the program anywhere between thirty days and a year. Many are severely emotionally disturbed. The goal is family preservation. They initiate services to keep the child in the home. Many families need other resources and support, and sometimes just a respite from their challenges with their child. Young people receive what they refer to as 101 services, which include social skills and conflict resolution, which help them manage and understand their emotions. Typically, services are provided in the home, but they can also receive services at their facility on Paramount Drive. Activities are provided to the youth and families at the facility. Today they have four young people in the program, giving the youth and families the skills needed to remain in the home. Many of the mentors are from the Waukesha area and many also work at other agencies. They can use other resources to work

with the families. They presently don't have any kids using the family reunification dollars. Glynis stated that are currently looking for more mentors. She was asked what the criteria are. She answered that basically they should like children, have an interest in social work, be able to work an hour or two a week, and more in the beginning as the relationship is being built, during which time they are on call. The agency provides various training for mentors.

Rebecca Simon, LSS Adoption Disruption Program spoke. This program deals with children that have been removed from their families and are in an adoptive home. They assist families that are at the point of wanting to dissolve the adoption. They are all referrals from Waukesha County. They are children struggling with trauma experiences, many times multiple trauma experiences. In most cases they are adolescents. The goal is to talk to the family regarding options in the program, stabilize the child, work with the family (parents and siblings), provide education and therapy. As a rule, the same therapist works with the parents and child. One outcome is to strengthen the attachment between the parents and the child, helping the parent to understand that it's really about the child's traumas, and not about lack of love for parents. They help kids to think positively of the parents, and to realize these are not the parents that caused them trauma. They work to keep children in the home. Typically, they serve a small population. This year they had five children in the program, and the normal range is four to six.

Jesús Mireles asked if she was part of the trauma informed system of care. She said no, but she would be interested. Jesús will follow up with her after the meeting.

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT**

Although there isn't really a committee, Diane Ripple went over the members list. Monica Bain can be removed from list. Diane asked if Cheri Sylla was still with CESA and Raquel advised that she will check if she's still interested in being in CAFSAC. Sheryl Gerstl now works in early head start. Barb Holtz suggested taking her off the member list, but contacting Carol Rogers from early head start. Caitlen Daniels has been promoted and is no longer available, and should be removed from the list.

Diane asked if anyone is interested in chairing the CAFSAC committee next year. She doesn't mind doing it another year, but offered the opportunity to anyone interested. Barb Holtz had done it for two years, as had Raquel Mehring. Diane stated that it is a fantastic committee to work with, and asked people to consider it.

Jesús asked if there was a vice chair, with the idea of preparing a successor in mind.

Jesús asked if she will set up a meeting date for the committee. Names will have to be turned in to the County Executive in October, so Diane will be scheduling a meeting soon. She asked members to put forward names and advised that the vote will be by email.

Diane asked if anyone had in mind any agencies they should reach out to. She offered to send them a letter inviting them to be part of CAFSAC, along with copies of previous meetings minutes. Jesús asked if childcare was represented. Diane asked if he had someone in mind. Jesús will talk with Antwayne and follow up.

Maura McMahon suggested the Hope Center. Diane will contact them.

Other suggestions were the Housing Authority and the School System. Diane brought up two possibilities that she will contact.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Barb Holtz extended an invitation to all to the opening of the Born Learning Trail. This is a trail at Hyer Park, which encourages parents and caregivers of children 0 to 5 years to interact through fun activities and games. There are signs along the trail that give instructions and ideas to caregivers to get involved in learning activities with their children. There are ten signs giving two or three suggestions, as well as reasons why doing that particular activity is important. The grand opening and ribbon cutting is from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Saturday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, with a short presentation at 10:00 a.m. Barb also has a portable trail that can be set up anywhere, and is in both English and Spanish. The goal is to get support from area businesses to expand building trails elsewhere in the county. They have twelve similar trails in Dane County and the feedback there is very positive. She asked that interested people RSVP to herself or United Way, or just drop by. She will follow up with information on this event via email.

Jim Pearson announced that the Your Choice Program is bringing in a speaker from Shoulder to Shoulder, providing support to families. Mike Coyne, will speak on October 19, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Steinhafels. He is teaching parents how to speak to children about difficult topics, such as alcohol and drug abuse.

Jim also stated that they are looking for locations for their addiction series for next year. They like to move around and get into a variety of different areas. The series starts up in October on Mondays, and they usually hold ten to fifteen sessions.

Ed Cohen reported that he is attending a Frontline Series on Adolescent Substance Abuse conference in October, and thought maybe others would be interested. It is on October 21<sup>st</sup>, at the Radisson Northshore in Glendale. It's sponsored by several area hospitals.

Diane Ripple announced that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. They will be putting purple silhouettes outside of the Women's Center representing lives lost as a result of domestic violence. The Women's Center will also be doing a press release.

Greg Jonas reported that he just finished a four-week Citizens' Academy presented entirely in Spanish at LaCasa de Esperanza. The Citizens' Academy is a program available to Waukehsa County residents to learn what the police do in the community. Included were presentations on gangs, the bureau of identification, the detective bureau and others. He gave kudos to the people at LaCasa. This was the first event, and they will be doing it again next year.

Greg Jonas announced that they are looking for speakers for a live call in TV show they are involved with in about a week and a half.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on October 21, 2010 at 8:30 in the Boardroom of the Human Services Center.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Ed Cohen motioned to adjourn, and Raquel Mehring seconded the motion at 9:33 a.m.

Approved on 10-21-10  
Date